

COUNTRY East Germany REPORT NO.

TOPIC Tank Repair Shop in Wuensdorf

25X1X EVALUATION PLACE OBTAINED 25X1A

25X1A DATE OF CONTENT

DATE OBTAINED DATE PREPARED 13 July 1953

REFERENCES _____

25X1A PAGES ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE) _____

REMARKS _____

25X1A SOURCE

Background.

1. The conversion of a section of the former Panzertruppende in Wuensdorf into a tank repair shop started in the fall of 1951. The repair shop in Wuensdorf was established as a counterpart of the repair shop in Kirchmoeser near Brandenburg. While, however, the plant in Kirchmoeser had also installations for the repair of Stalintype tanks, the plant in Wuensdorf had an equipment only for the repair of various types of T-34 tanks. The entire construction work for the Wuensdorf repair shop was executed by the Soviet KEO and, thus, by its subordinate special construction bureau VEB in Luckenwalde. The entire equipment was furnished under the control of the Office of the Ministerpresident for Special Missions with the East German government and all special construction work was supplied by a private firm in Wuensdorf. This firm also supplied the entire installation for the dismantling and assembling shop with conveyor belt and pertinent equipment.

Production Capacity.

2. The plant had from the outset been planned to have a production capacity of 60 percent of the repair shop in Kirchmoeser. By 1 January 1953, it was planned to have a capacity of four repaired tanks per day. This capacity was not attained, however, at that date. If the material required was available repaired tanks left the plant at a rate of only two per day prior to early February 1953. As a result of lacking material this rate could only be fulfilled 50 percent from December 1952 up to February 1953.¹

Further Plans.

3. In early February, a steel construction firm in Wuensdorf received order to enlarge the conveyor belt installation, cranes and other equipment to make it possible for the plant to repair and overhaul Stalintype tanks beginning 1 May 1953.² By 1 November 1953, the plant was planned to be able to assemble new tanks for which large installations such as the tank hulls, turrets, guns, and engines were to be supplied. Although the first stage of this conversion was not accomplished until late February 1953, there was, however, the technical possibility to start producing T-34 tanks if tank hulls, turrets, guns and engines were supplied and pertinent

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additional equipment were delivered. An electro-technical shop was scheduled to be set up to make possible the production of electrical equipment for tanks and to set up two new large furnaces in the steel foundry to be able to cast the bogie wheels.

Procurement of Material.

4. Tank guns and ball bearings for bogie wheels were a bottleneck and seriously hampered the repair during the period from December 1952 to February 1953. Parts such as screws and bolts were manufactured at the plant while such things as searchlights and rubber bands were supplied.³ A decision by the Ministers' Council in East Germany on 1 September 1952 placed deliveries of material to the APN of the plant under highest priority, giving them precedence over reparations deliveries. It was planned to have the aircraft armament plant in Ludwigsfelde which was in the process of formation produce engines for T-34 tanks for the plant in Wuensdorf. Indicative of these plans were stencils and models of these engines which, source noticed, were sent from Wuensdorf to Ludwigsfelde. [redacted] that the tank engines would be produced there. Source commented that the T-34 engine had been developed as an aircraft engine which was only later converted into a tank engine after it had proved unsuitable in aircraft.

Shortcomings in T-34 Tanks.

5. Most of the tanks which arrived for repair showed cracks in those places of the tanks in which the sidewalls were thicker than the bottom and at which the sides joined the bottom. They usually developed as the tanks turned. Similar cracks were also frequently observed in the upward recesses of the axles of the running gear in the tank hull. For repair a special device by which the tank hull was turned upside down after turret and running gear had been dismantled was set up to remove the cracks by means of special electric welding with KB 52-type electrodes.

Assignment and Personnel.

6. The plant was subordinate directly to General Ivano [redacted] who was subordinate to General Chuikov [redacted]. The plant was headed by Colonel Cokhlof (fnu) who was also responsible for its expansion initiated in the fall of 1951. The Soviet management included four sections, namely the production section which was headed by Lieutenant Colonel Vasilyev (fnu), the design office which was headed by Major Mozakov (fnu), the Soviet personnel section, including the guard detail, which was headed by Major Lonie (fnu), and the OGM (procurement of material) section which was headed by Major Chishkin (fnu).⁴ Only minor administrative positions were filled by German personnel in charge of matters pertaining to personnel and procurement of material. German manager was Androschowski (fnu) who supervised Fabian (fnu), an engineer whose substitute was Frank (fnu) and who was responsible for production, and Panthel (fnu), a foreman, who was responsible for the procurement of material. The German management was subordinate to the Section for Special Missions at the Office of the Ministerpresident in East Germany which was represented by Ziebell in Berlin. Ziebell assumed this responsibility in the fall of 1951.⁵

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The labor force at the plant included about 1,200 Soviet personnel, including guard detail, in December 1952. Source expressed the belief that this strength scarcely changed. The German civilian labor force which numbered between 1,500 and 2,000 was subject to frequent changes and included only a small percentage of persons living in the area of Wuensdorf. Most of the workers came from all over East Germany. Source noted that they were between 18 and 20 years old and concluded that they were personnel specially picked for political reasons.

KVP Deliveries.

7. In February 1953, between 25 and 35 percent of the T-34 tanks repaired were delivered to the KVP. A KVP detail quartered at Mellensee was stationed at the plant and received special training to serve as nucleus of a planned tank repair shop which was to be set up in the former torpedo plant in Neubrandenburg.⁶

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Miscellaneous.

8. [redacted] noticed that the yard of the plant was sealed off by the Soviets. About 10 officers commanded by Colonel Cokhlof went to a T-34 tank which was in the yard and, by action of a crane, heaved a heavy mat over the tank. Source thought that the mat was between 20 and 50 mm thick and had the form of the tank. When the gun of the tank also covered with a stocking-like cloth, the officers drove the tank in the yard, attempting to keep the mat in place when the tank turned. The mat was later removed. The following morning, source noticed a greenish graphite-like granular powder in the yard which he believed was left by the mat. Source repeatedly saw tanks crossing tank ditches on the adjacent training grounds. This practice involved a salvaged tank which had no turret, was driven into a ditch and served as support for a bridge of trees cut on the spot. Source observed that the tanks had no difficulty in crossing the ditch by means of this bridge.

- 25X1A 1. [redacted] Comment. The information on the output checks with previous information.
[redacted] 25X1A

- 25X1A 2. [redacted] Comment. This plan is still unconfirmed. Transportation records indicated that heavy tanks were still sent to Kirchmoeser for repair.

- 25X1A 3. [redacted] Comment. Small replacement parts are produced at a considerable rate by East German plants.

- 25X1A 4. [redacted] Comment. Colonel Ivanov was previously reported as chief of the GOFG headquarters, Colonel Cokhlof as chief of the Wuensdorf tank repair shop, Lieutenant Colonel Vasilyev as head of the production section, Major Chishkin as chief of the procurement section, Major Mosakov and Major Lonie were reported for the first time. The last information on assignments was submitted with [redacted] 25X1A



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- 25X1A 5.  Comment. German personnel holding key positions was previously reported except for Panthel.
- 25X1A 6.  Comment. It is possible that repaired tanks may be detached at the rate indicated (about 10 tanks). It is possible that a tank repair shop for the KVP may be built in Neubrandenburg. Another source reported an Elbe construction project in Neubrandenburg which possibly is this new tank repair shop.

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